



News from the Chief Executive

I was saddened to learn of the sudden death of Don Hunt who was an Associate member and a staunch supporter of BIGGA in the Devon and Cornwall Section. I had the privilege of knowing Don for a number of years and his enthusiasm and gentlemanly nature will be a sad loss. Our condolences go to his wife and family.

My condolences also go to the families of Peter Richmond and Matthew Folka both of whom died recently.

There seems to be much rumour and speculation regarding BIGGA's talks with the IOG regarding a possible merger. The two organisations put out a joint Press Release to the media following a recent meeting of representatives from both Boards of Management.

This was also reproduced in full on our own website within the 'News' section of the Members' area. Talks to date have centred round identifying prime aims and key issues, how discussions and a review will operate and how and when consultation with members will take place. As I have stated in earlier writings the talks are merely at an investigative stage and members will be consulted when there is something to be consulted about. I am in danger of repeating myself however it is important that members of both organisations understand that the membership will ALWAYS have the final say and that no agreement will be entered into unless the majority of members are in favour. It is inevitable that there will be mixed opinion and I would ask that everyone reserves judgement until the outcome of talks are communicated. The BIGGA Board of Management will be looking at the consultation process at their next meeting in June, coupled with this serious thought needs to be given to the voting process to ensure that all members have the chance to decide upon the Association's future. I am assured by Geoff Webb, IOG's Chief Executive, that the views expressed by the editor of The Groundsman, Trevor Ledger, in his column of the May issue are not the views of the IOG. The steering group that has been appointed by the Boards of BIGGA and the IOG is due to meet again in early July following which I will post a report on our web site as well as an update in the August edition of Greenkeeper International.

By the time that you read this two major tournaments will have taken place, the Welsh Open at the Celtic Manor and the BMW/PGA Tournament at Wentworth. I hope that the weather was kind to both sets of organisers and that Jim McKenzie and Chris Kennedy and their teams had a successful event.

John Pemberton



SCOTLAND – AYRSHIRE

Hello all! Hope you're all in good health and have started the season on the front foot. That unseasonably warm and dry weather in April gave us an early wake up call at Turnberry as we rushed out the hoses to our newly turfed areas. All major construction work in preparation for The Open in 2009 has been completed. This included (over the past two winters) 12 Championship tees, 21 fairway bunkers, the complete lifting, shifting, landscaping and re-laying of the 16th fairway alongside other nips and tucks here and there. Added length, hole re-shaping and strategic bunker placements were a must if the Ailsa course was to test the best in the game and I have no doubt that this will be the case, and it could get really ugly if the wind blows!

Lochgreen was the venue for the Spring Outing on Wednesday, April 25. Weather on the day was good with a stiff breeze proving a test over the opening six holes.

Our thanks to my pal Billy Fletcher and South Ayrshire Council for allowing us the times and use of the facilities and it was well commented on how fairly the course played, but I know that as Lochgreen is where I have played most of my golf over the past few years. Some had the cheek to say this was a major factor in the results! Our gratitude also to the chef's and friendly waitresses who provided excellent food and lovely beer.

The results were as follows: 1.1 D. Tweddell (Get In!), 37pts; 2.1. MacDonald (Unlucky!), 36pts; 2.3 G. Morrison (Lucky!), 36pts; 2.4 R. Macbeth (Alas!), 34pts. 2.1 M. Lothian (No comment!), 38pts; 2.2 R. Bunting (Robbed!), 38pts; 2.3 D. Jeffrey (Tough school!), 34pts; 2.4 G. Ross (Ya dancer!), 34pts. Trade Prize – D. Duthie (As usual!)

There were 45 members in attendance which is a great turnout. Thanks largely to a good number travelling from the Dumfries area and coming over from Arran - Thanks lads for helping to make it such an enjoyable day.

The Dundonald GC and Barrassie GC are hosting the BIGGA National Championship on October 8 and 9, so hopefully we can get some numbers in the competition and take some of the silverware. Our rematch against the Northern Irish lads has been scheduled for Friday, October 5. If there are any of you who played in last year's massacre who are unable to go over, good! I mean can you please let me know. Likewise if there are any brave souls interested in coming aboard please get in touch. More details will appear soon.

I can be reached at: denis.t@hotmail.co.uk or: 07939 104701

Denis Tweddell



SCOTLAND – EAST

I start this month's report with a plea to all East Section members to attend the Scottish National Tournament at Berwick Golf Club, on Thursday, June 21. With the event on your doorstep this year, the usual excuse

Around the Green

of distance does not apply in this case. It will also give everybody the opportunity to see at first hand the major improvements to the course that George and his team have carried out in recent years.

The Spring Outing was held on Tuesday, April 17, at the Glen GC, in North Berwick, where a total of 41 attended. As usual Ian Kinley and his team presented the course in excellent condition and drew fulsome praise from all in attendance, including our Scottish Representative, Peter Boyd. Our thanks go to the Glen GC for granting us courtesy of the course, the catering staff for keeping everybody fed and watered and last but certainly not least, to the trade for providing the raffle prizes. The results of the golf are as follows: Best Scratch – Keith Burgan, Goswick, 76pts; 1.1 Stuart Ferguson, Dundas Park, 78-6-72pts; 1.2 Mark Pagan, Eyemouth, 80-7-73; 2.1 Neil Jacobs, Glencorse, 93-13-80; 2.2 Adam Sherwood, Glencorse, 99-17-82; 3 Liam Grossart, Glencorse, 120-28-92; Best Nett – Colin McArthur, Mortonhall, 77-6-71; Veterans – Alistair Holmes, Seahouses, 78-5-73 (NB – you are catching me up Alistair) Trade – Jim Darling, Aitkens, 78-4-74.

On Tuesday, April 26 George Thompson, from Goswick, played in a team event at the Dukes Golf Course in Fife. The team was Captained by my old friend Andrew Corn, of Acorn Golf, and included Colin Powrie, from Ladybank, and Paul Murphy, from Downfield. Although, in George's words, his golf was dire, he had a great day and I understand he spent a lot of his time discussing his love of motorbikes with Andrew!

The Course Manager at Kilspindie GC, John Arbuckle, has recently returned to work after being rushed to hospital with a ruptured appendix. After three weeks in late January/early February of feeling unwell, and with his local doctor being unable to pinpoint the problem, he collapsed and was rushed to hospital on February 11 where he was given an emergency operation. Fortunately John has made a full recovery and is now back at work.

Mike Dooner



SCOTLAND – NORTH

Hello everybody, is this dry weather your friend or foe? I would imagine the links courses need some rain now, as it has been very dry for quite a while. We went 26 consecutive days from mid March without any rain. Thank God we had our irrigation system up and running by then. It was unusually warm through April and early May for this part of the world, anyway we shouldn't complain too much as it may turn cold in the summer.

There are three new members to add this month, Stewart Brown, Assistant at Royal Aberdeen GC; Andrew Smith, Greenkeeper at Meldrum House GC and Michael Forsyth, Greenkeeper at Rothes GC. Welcome to the North Section lads.

We will have had our outing at Oldmeldrum by now so the results will be posted next month. While talking about Oldmeldrum, Robert O'Donnell, the Head Greenkeeper, told me that they were excavating an area to extend a tee and they uncovered a Toro GM3 intact with the grass boxes still on the machine. There were some other pieces of equipment in there as well but it was the Toro that caught the eye. I wonder if

anybody will own up to dumping that one and have an idea how long it has been in there.

Raymond Warrender and Kevin Strachan have suggested putting on a bus from the Aberdeen area to go to the Autumn Outing at Fortrose GC. They would like to get an idea of numbers to see if it is feasible or not. I think it is a great idea and would allow for a bit of banter and camaraderie if we could get at least 12-15 people.

The Scottish Championship is at Goswick GC, near Berwick Upon Tweed, this year and I'm sure George Thompson and his staff will have the course looking its best. I bet George and the lads are glad that they won't have to travel far this year for the Scottish. They never miss one, it's great credit to them for supporting the event from so far away every year.

Andrew Nixon, who has been an Assistant at Fortrose GC, has left the club to try another profession. Fortrose GC would like to thank Andrew for his endeavours at the club and wish him all the best for the future.

Not much more from me this month. Keep up the good work and hopefully we will see some of you at the Scottish Championship at Goswick.

Robert N Patterson



SCOTLAND – WEST

Welcome to this month's West Section report. I'm sorry for the lack of reports the last couple of months, I've been in Australia visiting my family.

The Section visited the new Carrick course at Loch Lomond during May and the feedback was first class. I would like to thank Alec Clachan for allowing us to see the course in the early stages, also to Stuart Taylor, our Education Convenor, for arranging the day and to Gordon Howat, from Souters, for providing lunch.

On the education front – over the past month training courses have been run on manual handling and fire safety at GOSTA training in Glasgow. They turned out to be very successful and more courses will be arranged for later on in the year, thanks to Stuart for organising the courses.

The Section played their annual match against the Secretaries at Glenbervie. Stuart Taylor arranged the team for the day and they were victorious four matches to two.

The Spring Outing was held over Blair Beth GC, it was a fantastic day and the sun shone from start to finish. Eddie McGee had the course in first class condition as many folk commented - congratulations to Eddie and his staff. Everyone at the club was very helpful with the food and bar service was first class.

I would like to thank the Captain and Committee for courtesy of their fine course and hope to see them again in the future.

The results on the day were: Scratch Stuart Taylor; 1.1 Scott Mc Kittrick; 1.2 Andy Peace; 1.3 Brian Hillan; 2.1 Steven Copland; 2.2 John Barr; 2.3 Barry Mculloch; 3.1 Michael Maxton; 3.2 Richard Cuthbert; 3.3 Stephen Sheehan; Trade Prize - Robert Bruce.

Around the Green

The Scottish National Tournament will be held at Goswick GC on June 21. Please try and come along as it's a great day.

New members this month are: Kenneth Ambrose, Airdrie; James Gilmore and Christian Carrel, both East Renfrewshire. Welcome to the Section.

This year's night out will have a change of venue as we will be going to the Comedy Club in Glasgow, included will be three comedians entertainment and a three course meal.

Fraser Ross – 07970366355



NORTHERN – NORTH EAST

On April 19 we played our Spring Competition at Tynemouth GC. Credit goes to Head Greenkeeper, Ian Kerr, and his staff for the condition of their course - it was a pleasure to play there, the greens were excellent for the time of the year. A sunny day marred by a strong west wind made scoring pretty high but everyone who played enjoyed the day, pity there were not a few more playing – I'm sure they had their reasons for not been there. Our thanks to the following companies who donated prizes: Turfservices Ltd, Shorts, Greenlay, Hoggs of Fife, and, of course, to the committee of the golf club for granting us courtesy. Former Head Greenkeeper, Brian Udberg, of Tynemouth, was retiring at the end of April after 30 years - a mean feat these days working at the same club, good luck Brian, hope to see you at future events.

The leading scores were as follows: Best Gross - A.Gunn, Hexham GC, 82pts; Best Nett - K.Dinsdale, 90-20= 72; Northumberland Assistants Cup - B.Udberg, Tynemouth GC, 88-15= 73.

Next year we might be playing the Autumn Competition at Northumberland GC. I bet you we get a few coming out of the closet for that one - lets hope we get a strong turnout for the Autumn Competition this year at Ravensworth - another course that we have not played for along time.

Jimmy Richardson



NORTHERN – NORTH WEST

We had a great day at Prestbury GC on April 19. The course was in magnificent condition and the food was fantastic. Many thanks to

Bathgates for providing the Nearest to the Pin and the Longest Drive, and all our sponsors who contributed on the day.

The prize winners were: Best Gross - J. Ellisson; Best Nett - Simon Barker; Vets Prize - Peter Hogan (hope you're feeling better Peter) and the Guests Prize went to Garry Cusack. The committee would like to thank Prestbury GC for their hospitality and courtesy of the course. Next up is the Summer Tournament at Denton GC on June 28, not June 14 as published on the fixture list. If you wish to play in the tournament please send a cheque payable to: BIGGA North West Section for £20 to Bill Merritt, The Lodge, Beacon Park Golf Club, Beacon Lane, Dalton, Wigan, WN8 7RU. Mobile no: 07985175825. On a more sombre note, it is with great sadness I have to report the tragic death of Jason Dutton, Jason was the North West Representative for Turner Groundscare and I am sure everyone who met him would say how friendly and helpful he was. Our thoughts are with his wife and daughter and all the staff at Turner Groundscare for their sad loss.

Chris Sheehan



NORTHERN


I'm pleased to say that the weather was perfect for our first tournament of the year at Hessle GC. I would like to take this opportunity to thank George and his staff at Hessle for their hard work leading up to the Spring Tournament, the course was in fantastic condition and was a credit to you all. Also thanks to Tito Arana, and Alpha Amenity, for their sponsorship of the day.

The results on the day were as follows: Scratch Cup – Grant Lee; 1.1 John Waite; 1.2 Dave Collins; 1.3 Andy Slingsby; 2.1 Adam Speight; 2.2 Chris Martin; 2.3 John Watts; 3.1 Ken Christie (I know, I couldn't believe it either!); 3.2 Simon Rothwell; 3.3 Richard Smith. Trade: 1. Ian Collett; 2. John Dobson. Nearest the Pins: 6th Alan Barker; 16th Dave Smith.

Please remember that the next event in our calendar is President's Day, which this year is taking place at Ripon GC on Thursday, June 28. First tee off is at 1.30pm. If you wish to play, please let me have your name and payment of £17 at least one week in advance of the event.

One of the dates missing from your fixture list, which I am hoping you have all received, was the date for the Autumn Tournament. I am pleased to inform you that the day has now been arranged and is being held at Fulford GC on September 27 with first tee off at 1.35pm.

Yet another date for your diaries is Wednesday, September 5. This is the date we have booked to hold an end of season seminar. The seminar will



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be held at Moortown GC and is being sponsored by Rigby Taylor. The seminar is based upon the latest findings from the STRI at Bingley, with regard to their Disturbance Theory. Studies and data from the Institute are now challenging long held maintenance procedures and applications by greenkeepers. The two speakers on the day will be Henry Bechelet and Richard Windows, who I am sure some of you will already know. This is a free seminar, so anybody who is interested in attending please let me know, we will be starting around 9.30am, there will be a buffet lunch, and expect to finish at around 3pm.

And finally, I must say a massive thanks to John Dobson and Midlube Ltd for the sponsorship and distribution of this year's fixture list.

Adam Speight
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Mobile: 07739 319060



MIDLAND

As a committee we have discussed on many an occasion setting up our own BIGGA Midland Section web page. Thanks to the great skills of Leigh Swann we now have been able to produce what I can only describe as a superb web page. Such offers many informative and simple to access pages that offer information regarding many differing aspects of our profession. From education to general information, golfing fixtures and their individual start times, and the ability to post any comments you may have and interact with others on the site, are all available at: www.biggamidlandsection.com. Please visit our web page, it is for you, why not log on? You may be assured that such has been screened for viruses etc. and that such will not be omitted to third parties. Very well done Leigh. This month's calendar page is sponsored by our irrigation friend's of North Staffs Irrigation Ltd. Our thanks to them for their kind support.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome two new members to our Section, Russell Sinnett, of Stonebridge GC, and Malcom Barnett, of Warwickshire GC.

With the deepest of regret and sincere sadness, it falls upon me to inform you of the sad passing of our President Mr Peter Richmond. Peter was undeniably a great force within our profession, his counsel was always sought and never wrong. More over Peter was a true gentleman and friend to all he met. The world is a lesser place without him, but a better place because of him. Our deepest of condolences to his friends and family at this most difficult time. Good night Sir.

Sean McDade



EAST OF ENGLAND

Well chaps, don't say you weren't warned, if nobody gave me any news views and/or gossip I would have to talk about Scottish rugby, so here goes! Well maybe not, although we will do better than England in the World Cup, but hell, that's not difficult.

What a start to the season, in 26 years I have never known one quite like it – how dry and warm was that, don't you just love this job, hand-watering in April, what next, cutting fairways in January? Oh bugger, we did that as well, God bless global warming.

You should all have your fixture card by now, not all Rob's fault, we were double booked so a bit of juggling was required but we got there. Our thanks go to JCB for sponsoring it this year.

There are a few changes this year, for example, there are two order of merit awards, the main one and one for the under 25's which is sponsored by Banks - thanks Simon. We also have a two night stay at Harrogate up for grabs, this will be awarded to two members who have done the most to support the Section throughout the year, Course Managers and Committee are not included, this is sponsored by Wurths - thanks Ian.

Ransomes Jacobsen have sponsored the half way house at every event this year which is greatly appreciated.

The first Golf Day of the year was held at Seacroft, which was sponsored by Rigby Taylor, the course was in fantastic condition – a credit to Tim and his staff. Our thanks also go to STG supplies for the new Nearest the Pin and Longest Drive markers. The results were as follows: 1. B. Robinson; 2. L. Howkins; 3. A. Cox; 4. G. MacDonald. Nearest the Pin – G. Cooper; Longest Drive – R. Bemment; Trade Prize – R. Latham; Longest Walk – Matt Smith.

All the best for the season.

Allan Walker
07974816927



MID ANGLIA

Hello chaps, I hope you are all getting to grips with the dry start to the season as I write this in the summer like month of May.

I would like to congratulate Gerald Bruce for completing the London Marathon, especially after getting a blister after just six miles. Well done mate.

Our first competition was held at East Herts GC at the beginning of May and the results were as follows: 1. S. Mason, Stocks, 38pts on countback; 2. J. Smith, South Beds, 38pts; 3. M. Halverson, East Herts, 37pts. Nearest the Pin – F. Whittle, Stocks, Straightest Drive – J. Elborn, Shendish Manor.

John and myself have both qualified for the National Championship up in Scotland this year - If anyone feels like joining us, I am sure there will be application forms available from BIGGA HQ, it would be good to have a team entered and being in October we should be fairly quiet on the course.

The committee and all who played would like to thank East Herts GC for their hospitality on the day. Also a big thank you to Neil Faubel and his team for the hard work and presentation that went into giving us a course in excellent condition.



Thanks to our sponsor of the day, Darren Mugford, from Rigby Taylor, for the prize table, (now I have a new bag to go with my new handicap) and, of course, to all our other trade members who always support our Section so well.

That's all for now folks, but if you want anything aired through ATG then please get in touch with a committee member and we will do our best to get it printed.

The next competition will be at one of my old clubs, Welwyn Garden City GC on August 9, it will be an afternoon tee off with a three course evening meal, hope to see you there.

Steve Mason



SOUTH EAST – SURREY

Monday, May 7. It rained today in Surrey, not much but enough to water in the fertiliser/weed and moss killer I had spread by hand on Sunday. I am now waiting for the deep green lawn, the packet promised, to appear at any moment so that I can photograph it and show you all my expertise? It rained as I mentioned but only when I was at the top of the ladder washing the conservatory roof. I got soaked much to the amusement of my wife who was sitting reading in the said conservatory. I did contemplate climbing down and waiting for a dry spell but once committed I wanted the job done. So I got wet but the conservatory roof, conservatory sounds more up market than lean-to, is algae free and a shining example to all conservatory owners. So much for my weekend and I hope you all had as much fun as I did and are now looking forward to the rest of the rain that is forecast for this week.

They say no news is good news but that's no good when you have a monthly report to fill and only a little news to fill it with, so help me out, don't bore the wife as I suggested in last month's effort, tell me and save yourself the torment of reading my usual (creative) endeavours. One member who didn't bore the wife was Jason King, from Woodcote Park GC, for Paula was too busy giving birth to their first son Charlie 8lbs 6ozs at 12.40am on April 19. Congratulations to you both from us all. Also congratulations to John Budd, from Ham Manor GC, the new Course Manager at Effingham GC who is now probably looking forward to rejoining Surrey Section after many years lost in the wilds of Sussex. Royal Mid Surrey GC also has a new Course

Manager and we welcome Gavin Kinsella who is leaving Royal Blackheath GC in South London for the 36-hole course in Richmond. The draw for the Surrey Bowl has been forwarded to all participants, so good luck

to you all and may the best team win - especially Mark Harvey and his partner.

Results of the second golf event at Gatton Manor GC will appear in July's edition and I hope the turnout proves to be larger than the response so far predicts. Please support Surrey's Golf Days or they will disappear and then what would I do?

Finally I'm pleased to report that the something that Barry Robertson had operated on has not fallen off and is nearly back to full working order and he can now get it just above shoulder height.

Brian Willmott



KENT

Golfers. Where would we be without them? All shapes, sizes, ages, races, classes and ethnic backgrounds but all with one thing in common, a love of the game which we work tirelessly to provide for them. And as an ever-increasing number of this most unique of species flock to us at Birchwood, one cannot help but be swept along with the infectious enthusiasm that so many vastly different people display when they approach the first tee.

Golf is now very much a game for the masses and has long since shed it's millstone of being an elitist pastime, thanks largely, in my opinion, to a certain Mr Woods who has transcended many divides and has made the sport of golf big business.

Most greenkeepers are now also golfers and are treated with far more respect whether we are playing our courses or just when we are maintaining them. Our paying guests and members are far more appreciative of the intricacies of golf course management these days than they were in years gone by, when we were required to be neither seen nor heard by anybody.

BIGGA have played a big role in helping our cause but the now universal appeal of our great game has, ultimately, improved the lot of the green keeping profession. Very rarely these days do we get referred to as mere grass cutters.

Golfers are also a more discerning breed than their predecessors of old. Very few are loyal to a single club come what may, but are more than willing to travel 20 or 30 miles to get a decent game. That puts pressure on us to provide the best possible environment and therefore ensure the future of our clubs which would no longer survive without a first-class core product.

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Around the Green

The most beneficial part of my membership with BIGGA all relates to this end. The regular interaction with like-minded individuals at a variety of different courses who are more than happy to impart some of their unique knowledge to help out their fellow man sets our profession apart from surely any other. In what other career would you find local rivals getting together sharing experiences and knowledge to help each other's business?

No, in this cut-throat world our profession is unique and something we should all be proud of. Solidarity Brothers! Tune in again next month for more inane drivel - unless you lot give me some news to write about!

Don't forget our next golf day which is a 2pm tee off at Westgate and Birchington GC in Westgate on Sea. Entry forms along with a host of other informative tidbits can be found on our recently re-launched website at: kentgreenkeepers.co.uk Many thanks to Danny Stunt, of Redlibbets GC, who was given the unenviable task of totally revamping the old site and has really come up trumps for us.

Good luck to Gavin Kinsella who is moving from Royal Blackheath to Royal Mid-Surrey. I guess he just can't get that blue blood out of his veins!

Don't forget to contact me, or any member of your committee, via the webpage with news or pictures.

Rob Holland



LONDON

Hello and Welcome to the London Section. I hope you are all well and the season is well underway.

I'm glad to see we finally gotten some rain after the NO April showers! I can't remember ever hand-watering so early in any year. There's no gossip to report at the moment but please let me know if you have anything to put in the magazine!

The Spring Meeting was held at Brookmans Park GC, with a great turnout. There was a good standard of golf on the day (mostly from Brookmans Park). Thanks to my playing partners Jamie and Gordon for an enjoyable round. We must give a special mention to Darren and his team for all their hard work, the course was very impressive. Everyone I spoke to complimented the superb conditions. Also thanks goes to the Catering, Bar staff and new Secretary for giving us a brief insight to the club's history.

The results of the day are as follows: 1. Johnson, Sandy Lodge, 37pts; 2. Ian Boothby, Brookmans Park, 36pts; 3. James Baldry, Brookmans Park, 34pts; 4. Daniel Watts, Brookmans Park, 34pts.

Good luck to Pat and Ian who go through to the National Championship in Scotland. A big thank you to AT Olivers for sponsoring what turned out to be a good day with great prizes. As always a big thank you to our on going sponsors: Supergrass; Avoncrop Amenity; Rigby Taylor; Seoul Nassau; Prime Irrigation; Rainbird; Turner Groundscare; Banks Amenity; Browns; Scotts; Gems Professional.

Lastly I would like to thank Aaron Percival, David Badham, Jamie Lomas and Rob Phillips for their hard work on the day.

Please see below for 2007 fixtures: Summer meeting at Gerrards Cross GC on Thursday, August 16, tees from 1.45pm. Turkey trot meeting (Scotts Trophy) at Porters Park GC on Wednesday, December 12, tees from 10am.

Finally if you have any information e.g. achievements, good or bad news or anything interesting! Please let me know on: 07818410333.

Matt Pledsted



EAST ANGLIA

By the time you read this report, you should have received your fixture list for this year. I am sorry that it is so late but we had to reschedule a fixture and it has taken time to negotiate with another club – but do not worry, everything has now been finalised. The National Championship will take place at Barassie GC and Dundonald GC, near Prestwick, on October 8 and 9.

April 25 saw 45 of our happy band descend on Newton Green GC for our first meeting of the year. The course was in excellent condition, which was a fitting tribute to Kelvin Sansum and his team – John Morley-Smith, Martin Brightwell and Chris Gurton's hard work. The Secretary, Carol List, and the Club Captain, Ian Woodhead, made us feel very welcome. I would like to thank all the Club House staff for the superb meal and service throughout the day.

Our main sponsor was Ernest Doe, and Eddie Jack and Andy Turbin were on hand to ensure that everything was ready for the off. As usual the Section Secretary, Ian Willett made sure that the day ran as smoothly as possible.

On to the results: 0-9 Handicap Group – 1. Michael Virley, 34pts; 2. Nick Brewster, 33pts; 3. Peter Howard, 33pts. 10-18 Handicap Group – 1. Robert Ransome, 37pts; 2. Glen Rayfield, 29pts; 3. Wayne Thrower, 28pts. 19-28 Handicap Group – 1. Andrew Baker, 34pts; 2. John Morley-Smith, 32pts; 3. Martin Mison, 29pts.

Michael Virley and Robert Ransome will represent the Section at the National Championships. Trade and Guest results – 1. Edward Clarkson, 33pts; 2. Paul Hewitt, 32pts; 3. Ian Woodhead, 31pts. Nearest the Pin – Wayne Thrower; Longest Drive – Jams Gill.

The coveted toilet seat went to Keith Titshall – this is the second occasion his name is to be put on the trophy, he was quite magnanimous in accepting the honour. The Section would like to thank: Ernest Doe, Aitkens, Tacit, Headland, Rigby Taylor, Collier Turf Care, SISIS, Atterton & Ellis, Lely UK, Tomlinson Groundcare, Consult Clarkson and Scotts for their continual support of the Section. If I have missed anyone out please let me know and I will include you next time.

Clive Osgood, our Regional Administrator, popped in on his way to another meeting at the London Section and wished everyone well.



The presentation of the prizes was overseen by The Club Captain, Ian Woodhead and Eddie Jack.

Our next meeting will take place at Stowmarket GC on Thursday, June 14. On a finishing note, Mark Henderson has now joined Rookery Park GC as Course Manager. May I take this opportunity to congratulate him on his promotion and wish him well with his new golf club. See you soon - at our next meeting.

Ian Willett



ESSEX

What a month we have had - no rain until May 7! That's six weeks without anything significant. I recorded 14mm in 24 hours at home which was just what we needed. My courses are certainly starting to struggle, as are most of the courses around our area.

The first Section Tournament of the year is under our belts and what a fine day we had, our thanks go to Jon Selwood, of Avoncrop Amenity Products, for their sponsorship. Gosfield Lake GC was the venue and boy did they do us proud. 51 players were on the start sheet and it was smooth running all day.

Well done to Antony Kirwan for organising it. He mixed us all up and with a two-tee start, we were all in on time for a fine evening meal. Our thanks go to the catering staff for looking after us so well during the day.

The inclusion of starting times on our new website helped those that looked, www.essexbigga.co.uk again our thanks to Tom Smith, of Colne Valley, for setting it all up. Personally, I had an abysmal day but enjoyed the companionship of Andy Turbin and Jamie Hughes who, though not tearing the course apart had a good couple of scores.

Winners on the day, apart from the course that was playing very short due in part to the hard ground conditions and strong wind were: Best overall - Nick Gates, 36pts; 1.1 - all on count back, Tom Smith, 35pts; 1.2 Adam Milward, 35pts; 1.3 Robert Bramwell, 35pts; 2.1 Don Clark, 34pts; 2.2 Nick Swanson, 32pts; 2.3 James Morgan, 31pts. The Guest Prize was won by Olly Homewood, 35pts. The Trade Prize went to Mark Clements 37pts. Longest Drive - Will Sjoberg.

With 51 players in action, the Nearest the Pin was won by NO ONE. Hard conditions meant pinpoint accuracy, if you wanted to be anywhere near the flag and the temptation to go for it in such hard conditions meant your ball took a flyer when it landed. So the course won on this occasion.

Our thanks also to the owner of Gosfield Lake, Ralph Roe, for the courtesy of the course and to the staff for their efficient service. The greenkeeping

staff under the leadership of Steve Parsons did a great job in presenting the course under very difficult weather conditions. Our trade members supported us as ever, filling our raffle table to overflowing and we thank them for their continued support.

Antony Kirwan has asked that if any greenkeepers are interested in offering their course for inclusion in our 2008 calendar of events would they please contact him? azt216@btinternet.com

The date for the Summer Tournament at Theydon Bois GC is Wednesday, June 27 - So be sure to make a note and get your entries in as soon as possible. Entry forms are on the website.

Anyone who has any news for inclusion in ATG can email me at: highwoods.photographic@virgin.net or call me on: 01206 852353.

Arnold Phipps-Jones



SOUTH WEST

At last, a decent day for golf. Upwards of 30 members attended the Spring Competition played at Cotswold Hills GC, Cheltenham on April 25. "Wayne's World", as the lads sometimes refer to the course, was in fantastic condition with plenty of spring blossom on the flowering cherries and other trees. Tees and fairways were in very good order despite last minute difficulties with the fairway mower, and the greens good enough to die for. Wayne and the team have done a significant amount of work around the greens, tidying up bunkers and green surrounds and this really showed in the presentation of the course. The greens themselves were fast and in very good early condition - Wayne told me afterwards that he mowed at 4.5mm by hand, the greens had been scarified 15 mm deep, three to four weeks prior to the event, about 30 tonnes of top-dressing and a 4.0.10 plus iron fertiliser had been applied. Wayne also verti-cuts the greens quite often during the spring to even up the growth and prevent bobble of the ball. All in all, a very good start to the season. I had the pleasure of playing with Jon Jarvis and Roger Neale who were wonderful company, although when they asked where the green was on the 10th hole, I told them it was a dog-leg with the green situated in the trees, Jon said "oh, that should quite suit you then!" Both played so well with Jon unfortunately suffering a mild back problem over the final few holes. No such problem for Roger, though, who was smashing the ball miles off the tee - so much so that you actually felt quite sorry for the club and ball. The competition was keenly contested and was won by John Batchelor with 39 pts, from the newly married Richard Louisson, and Roger Neale with 38 pts respectively. While presenting the prizes, Cotswold Hills Club Captain, Colin Gay, made a particularly nice speech welcoming all the competitors, and paid tribute to the hard work of the club staff.

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Around the Green

He did suggest that Wayne had organised the other staff into hand mowing of greens and hand raking bunkers, while he himself did a little gentle swishing to warm up his swing, which I'm sure was quite untrue – probably. Thanks very much to Cotswold Hills for the day, particularly the warm welcome.

Don't forget Race Night at Bath Racecourse on June 27, again arranged by Jon Jarvis. Contact Jon at Lansdown GC to book your place.

Winning the Spring Tournament was actually a double celebration for John Batchelor, having been recently promoted to Deputy Course Manager at Long Ashton. Congratulations to John on both counts, and best wishes from everyone. It was very nice to see Ivor Scoones at Cotswold Hills. Ivor, who is back on his feet after a recent knee replacement operation, was in fine form and looking forward to his retirement later in the year. Long Ashton are organising a testimonial competition to which our section committee are sending a team. This will be played at Long Ashton in July.

Back at Minch, everyone's been laughing at me all winter putting in irrigation and lakes etc while it poured incessantly with rain. But after a hot dry April they weren't laughing quite so loudly - although I suppose there might have been the odd titter the other Saturday morning, when I got to grips with some hand-watering. I plugged a hand hose into one of the new QRV's (Quick Release Valves) by the 10th green and watered a dry spot. Unfortunately while unplugging the hose, the end came off sending a very impressive jet of water some 40 feet into the air. This crashing torrent of water was gushing into a bunker and quickly started to wash the sand away, I had no valve key, no pumphouse key – even an umbrella or a bit of board would have come in useful, but no. There was only one thing for it, with my waterproof jacket over my head, I blundered blindly into the deluge of water on all fours fumbling for the valve. My 12 year old collie, Meg, who up until that point had been sensibly watching from a safe distance away, obviously saw danger and helpfully took hold of my trouser-leg in her teeth, dug all four paws in, and tried to pull me back while growling and snarling. Thank God there was no one watching, or worse still with a camera, seeing the much vaunted Course Manager deliberately crawling into a deluge while being savaged by a rabid dog. Hey – man's best friend (crossed my mind to give it a good kicking afterwards, but no).

Look forward to the Summer Competition at Cumberwell, and the Marc Haring Quiz Evening afterwards.

Paul Worster
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SOUTH COAST

Our first golf meeting for the season was the Spring Tournament held at Romsey GC on Thursday, May 3 - Of course magnificent conditions as usual with a slight easterly wind. Mike Wheeler-Osman and his greenkeeping team had done a fantastic job in the preparation and presentation of the golf course for our 27 holes of golf. We had a new starter for the day, as I was treading the boards that evening, Mike King, from Vitax, greeted everybody on the first tee and ensured proceedings kept on time. Thank you very much Mike.

The Spring Tournament is a very special occasion as we remember Colin White. This golf day is dedicated to his memory. When I speak to people about Colin, it is no coincidence that we always end up smiling and laughing he was such a kind and joyful person. Once again we had great pleasure in welcoming Colin's mum Jill Francis, Colin's Brother Rob White and Gilbert Francis (Rob's golf partner in crime). Jill made a lovely speech at the end of the evening and presented a memento to the Course Manager, Mike, and his staff. Jill always does this as Colin was an ex-Groundsman at Southampton FC and Spurs and she believes Greenkeepers and Groundsmen do a superb job in presenting our sporting surfaces.

The hospitality and catering was second to none. The Section offers many thanks to Romsey GC for welcoming us and looking after us so well. The sponsors for the day were Vitax and Avoncrop Amenity (me), who of course provided a wonderful prize table. Much gratitude is shown to our sponsors.

The results for the day were: 1.1 Nick Reynolds, 51pts; 1.2 Simon Ridland, 50pts; 2.1 Simon Justice, 56pts; 2.2 Chris Bitten, 53pts; 3.1 Doug Pringle, 50pts; 3.2 Paul Dyter, 47pts; Longest Drive – Mark Davis; Nearest the Pin – Simon Ridland. Congratulations to all.

Also special thanks to Chris Briggs, my colleague from Avoncrop, for taking over from me for the evening's presentations.

The next Golf Day will be the Summer Tournament at Andover GC on July 3 (Andover's Centenary Year). We look forward to visiting Chris Sturgess on that day.

That's all folks - of course any news then please call me.

Joe Crawley
07721 389200

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Section Notes -

Can all notes be emailed to: melissa@bigga.co.uk by the 5th of the month prior to publication please. Suggested word guide: 500